Nangarhar University Social Science Journal

e-ISSN: 3079-2398 (Online) p-ISSN: 3079-238X (Print)

NUSSJ

Vol:1(01), Nov: 2024

Journal Homepage: https://nussj.nu.edu.af

Review Article

Analysis of the Themes of the Stories and Literary Life of Saadat Hasan Manto

Ghufranullah Maroof[1*], *Mohammad Qaseem Kashaf*[2], *and Sayed Samim Hashimi*[1]

[1]*Department of Hindi Language and Literature, Faculty of Languages and Literature, Nangarhar University, Afghanistan.*
[2] *Department of Pashto Language and Literature, Faculty of Languages and Literature, Nangarhar University, Afghanistan.*

ABSTRACT

Saadat Hasan Manto, a pioneer of Urdu writing, is renowned for his incisive storytelling and unflinching portrayals of social realities. The article examines Manto's literary paths and the profundity of his works' subjects. Manto, born in 1914, was influenced in his storytelling style and thematic concerns by early exposure to the works of Western literary luminaries such as Oscar Wilde and Victor Hugo. Manto's paintings are lauded for their bold realism and precise depiction of societal realities, while they face criticism for their purportedly gruesome nature. This study analyzes Manto's thematic focus, encompassing political, social, and sexual concerns, through a comprehensive examination of academic sources. The findings illustrate Manto's commitment to social critique and realism by depicting a society rife with gender issues, class struggles, and moral hypocrisy. We advocate for Manto's literature, which is occasionally misconstrued and criticized, as a sincere representation of the societal conditions of his era. The study concludes that Manto significantly contributed to Urdu literature by offering an authentic representation of the human condition and a comprehensive critique of societal norms. Saadat Hasan Manto, a pioneer of Urdu writing, is renowned for his incisive storytelling and unflinching portrayals of social realities. This essay examines Manto's literary paths and the profundity of his works' subjects. This study analyzes Manto's thematic emphasis on political, social, and sexual issues through a comprehensive examination of academic sources. The findings illustrate Manto's commitment to social critique and realism by depicting a society rife with gender issues, class struggles, and moral hypocrisy. We advocate for Manto's literature, often misconstrued and criticized, as a sincere representation of the societal conditions of his era. The study concludes that Manto significantly contributed to Urdu literature by offering an authentic depiction of the human condition and a comprehensive critique of societal norms.

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords

Manto, Urdu Literature, theme, social norm. thematic.

Article History

Received:09-09-2024
Accepted: 01-11-2024
Published: 17-11-2024

Cite this Article

Maroof, G., Kashaf, M. Q., & Hashimi, S. S. (2024). Analysis of the Themes of the Stories and Literary Life of Saadat Hasan Manto. *Nangarhar University Social Science Journal, 1(01), 32-35.* https://doi.org/10.70436/nussj.v1i01.3

Introduction

Saadat Hasan Manto, the renowned Urdu literary figure, was born in 1914. Notwithstanding his critique of schooling, Minto's lifelong desire for learning, combined with his time constraints, compelled him to produce an eclectic array of books that explored numerous topics, finally satisfying the reader's unquenchable curiosity (Waqar, 1961).

Throughout his academic pursuits, he familiarized himself with the literary contributions of prominent authors such Victor Hugo, Maxim Gorky, Chekhov, Pushkin, Oscar Wilde, and Mussappa. Prior to entering the literary domain, he translated narratives from Victor Hugo's book "The Story of Captive" and Oscar Wilde's play "The Goddess." Subsequently, he composed

*Corresponding Author:
Email: ghufran.maroof@nu.edu.af
https://doi.org/10.70436/nussj.v1i01.3
© 2024 The Authors. Published by Nangarhar University, this is an open access article published under the CC-BY license https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0

his inaugural narrative entitled "Tamasha." Manto resided in Bombay during that time and described it as a beautiful and joyful phase of life. He remarked that it was a vibrant phase of life in Delhi lasting a year and a half. Following the 1947 partition of India and Pakistan, Manto relocated to Pakistan, passed away in 1955, and was interred in the Milli Sahib cemetery in Lahore (Qadeer, 2016). Manto is a famous name in Urdu fiction. Manto has published nine collections of short stories. After his death, a number of unpublished stories have also been received in fine print. (Waris, 2003) In addition to short stories, Minto has also tested his pen power in plays, literary pieces, articles, translations, and reviews. Any literary position Manto has achieved in Urdu literature, following Munshi Prem Chand, truly deserves it.

Methodology

In this thematic analysis of stories penned down by Saadat Hasan Manto, the methodology appears to put accentuation on the qualitative dimension especially in the identification of typical motifs which are political, social, and determinedly sexual. The analysis is based on the primary narratives of Toba Tek Singh, Thanda Gosht, and Naya Qanun by Manto, and employs outside sources such as works of literary criticism and books. Thematic analysis is used to classify the main recurring themes, while textual analysis delves into the linguistics, the plot narrative - and the use of imagery by the author in question. Moreover, contextual analysis entails the examination of the broader temporal and sociopolitical context.

Personality and Literary Position

Manto possesses a distinctive narrative style. Following Munshi Prem Chand, Manto has attained a significant literary stature in Urdu literature, which he rightfully merits. He represented his observations of his social milieu as he perceived them and presented them to the readers. Certain academics and observers deemed him a dishonest author, labeling his works as vulgar and rife with obscenity, subjecting him to heavy criticism; nonetheless, these critiques did not detract from the art of storytelling. The renowned author and critic of Urdu literature, Muhammad Hasan Askari, discusses Manto's literary stature and the craft of storytelling.

Manto is a distinguished and illustrious figure in Urdu writing, particularly in the realm of narrative fiction. While short tales have been incorporated into Urdu literature, it is evident that we are less proficient than Western literature due to the absence of technical elements inherent to short stories. Our short stories exemplify our culture. In-depth examination of our history and culture can only be achieved through the analysis of narratives. Manto, utilizing his profound intellect and capabilities, unconditionally and fearlessly, addressed subjects that could not be amplified through narrative writing. He has disclosed the realities of his society and has addressed class contradictions, women's rights, human inequality, sexual poverty, and other significant issues, persisting in his creative endeavor with remarkable indifference and audacity (Mubin, 2008).

Manto has been accused of being a licentious and provocative writer in the realm of Urdu literature. The defining traits of his narratives are obscenity and savagery, rendering them unreadable in light of cultural, traditional, and societal norms. He states, "If you cannot endure my narratives, it signifies an inability to endure the times." I shall reveal the secrets of society, civilization, and the evolution of the era, which are inherently raw and savage. Individuals and readers characterize me as a daring and indecent author; yet, I do not inscribe on a blackboard with a black pen, but rather employ a white pen to enhance the visibility of the blackboard's darkness" (Al-Azhari, 2011).

Prominent and influential writers of Urdu literature have denounced such accusations and statements against him as fake. Manto is a quintessential realist, depicting his observations of the environment with fidelity for his readers. Not relatives, but various manifestations of life—happiness, grief, malevolence—regardless of their appearance, are presented in a uniform manner. Askari composes narratives regarding his experiences. The allegations that Manto is a brazen and indecent writer are entirely unfounded and erroneous. Minto was never an audacious or indecent writer; rather, he was a principled artist. He consistently had confidence in himself. He endeavored to enhance himself and cultivate personal growth in his daily existence. He persevered, and his heart refused to acquiesce, so he did not avert his gaze from such circumstances in his heart and mind" (Al-Azhari, 2011).

Dr. EB Ashraf asserted, "I concur that sexuality is a significant element in Manto's narratives; however, it is not indicative of his personal sexual inclinations and desires, but rather a poignant reflection of societal issues." It is essential to document it. In our society, characterized by excessive force, cruelty, and perversion, it is unsurprising that narratives such as Thanda Kusht, Bo, Pahaha, Pahlawan, and Kali Shalwar depict the adulteress of her community unveiling her true nature" (Qadeer, 2016).

Manto has really been accused of being an immoral and vulgar writer of Urdu literature, and he has been deemed culpable in this respect. The author, despite being prominently listed among shameless and immoral writers, cannot be categorically condemned; his works are

characterized by clarity and truthfulness. When the themes of his narratives are analyzed, any provocative language appears vacuous. Furthermore, he refrains from endorsing obscenity and immorality; rather, he constructs dilemmas aimed at critique and condemnation, which may provoke thought among discerning individuals.

Manto authentically depicts his civilization, embedding his perceptions of the world inside the structure of his narratives. Dr. Ibadat Barilvi asserts, "In the realm of Urdu narrative literature, Manto epitomizes realism." He can be compared to Maupassant, the renowned French storyteller, as both Maupassant and Manto eschew lengthy and intricate character descriptions, conveying substantial information succinctly. The conciseness is the primary cause for the allure and engagement of creative literature. However, his narratives are quite delightful and engaging (Al-Azhari, 2011).

Manto denounced various detrimental societal practices, including sexual diseases and oppression, in his narratives, aspiring for a society devoid of unwarranted restrictions, fear, mistrust, humiliation, and shame. The name holds no significance, and an individual can readily attain his objectives and desires. Manto has chosen diverse subjects from his society and environment for his narratives, with the paramount focus being the woman, who embodies the roles of a public figure, mother, daughter, and wife. In his own realm, both female and male classes have been subjected to immorality, which serves as a representation of sexual sins and societal vices inside Manto's natural world and perspective. Manto critiques the sexual immorality and excessive behaviors stemming from societal and religious sanctions, highlighting hypocrisy, deceit, and cunning, and employs his pen to address these concerns.

Manto's narrative literature presents a specific class of women, whom he depicts as fundamentally innocent, pure, and virtuous in his early stories. However, he attributes their transgressions and moral failings primarily to men, who understand their vulnerabilities. Once these women become ensnared in the allure of sin, they exhibit a disregard for their descent into moral depravity, as such male influences compel them towards immorality and dishonesty.

Thematic Analysis of the Stories of Sadat Hasan Manto

Nevertheless, the renowned author is influenced by the political, economic, social, and other circumstances of his era. Manto also depicted the Second World War in 1939 and the subsequent partition of India and Pakistan in 1947, highlighting the numerous crimes, murders, carnage, and the millions of lives lost to violence. The time spent creating the illustration has exceeded that of any other author. He has examined every facet of these issues, selected each category as the focus of his narrative, and emphasized every dimension of oppression and aggression inside his tales. He discusses the calamity resulting from the partition of India and Pakistan in the beginning of one of his narratives. "Do not specify that 100,000 Hindus or 100,000 Muslims perished; rather, state that 200,000 individuals were killed. While this may not seem like a significant tragedy, it is indeed profound that the identities of both the perpetrators and the victims remain unknown." The issue persists; yet, by exterminating one hundred Hindus, the Muslims believed they had eradicated Hinduism, and despite the slaughter of one hundred thousand Muslims, the Hindus did not renounce Islam and Islamism. The profound reality is that several Muslims The concept of killing has evolved within Islam and Islamism. Individuals who believe that religion, faith, and belief can be eradicated from our essence are remarkably simplistic and misguided. It can be obliterated by a firearm, a blade, and a dagger (Qadeer, 2016). Manto is recognized as the originator of extensive human, social, and political ideas. He considers humanity superior to all else. He vehemently opposes killings and injustices perpetrated in the name of religion, language, and nationality.

Manto's narrative prose The floral garden exudes a fragrant array of vibrant roses. Minto has authored and published numerous political narratives that profoundly reflect the political issues of his era, utilizing his stories to denounce the detrimental politics of the moment. Through Tamasha, New Law, Student Union, and various other narratives, he conveys a profound message of liberty and autonomy to the Indian population. Notable among his politically themed stories are Naya Qanun, Tamasha, Khooni Tahok, Student Union, 1919 Ki Ek Baat, and Matami Jalasa, among others (Khaksha, 2002).

Societal Themes: Father Minto is a collection of narratives that encompass factual accounts of societal and environmental challenges and adversities. Manto's preferred subject is the examination of human character and nature, since he thoroughly and extensively analyzed his environment and society. He asserts that a woman and a man are not only characters in a narrative; rather, their existence is essential and mutually complimentary, rendering them incomplete in isolation, as evidenced by his numerous stories and literary works. Specializing in female topics.

Sexual themes: Manto is prominently recognized among Urdu literature authors noted for their propensity towards vulgar, obscene, and sexual themes (Nighat, 1988).

Minto has depicted the stark reality of his sexually impoverished culture transparently through his narratives. As a realist and a writer grounded in realism, he depicted every unpleasant facet of his society in a highly artistic manner. Despite the author's allegations of promiscuity and sexual themes, scholars, critics, and commentators have provided profound insights on his works, deeming them a genuine representation of contemporary life and context. The renowned Urdu literary figure Syed Abd Ali Shah states: "Minto is, in every respect, a photographer of facts." He depicts an authentic representation of his society with utmost honesty, integrity, and courage in his narratives. A pragmatic writer must understand the priority of societal issues and distinguish between their essential and non-essential elements (Al-Azhari, 2011).

In summary, an examination of Manto's short stories reveals him to be a writer of humanitarian narratives. He crafted his narratives from his observations of his surroundings and experienced emotional distress as a sensitive individual. He abhorred intolerance, division, carnality, trickery, and dishonesty, unequivocally rejecting and condemning these traits in all his writings (Qamar, 2000).

Conclusion

Consequently, Saadat Hasan Manto is regarded as a prominent figure in Urdu literature. He critically addressed the challenges and detrimental habits of his society, using his writing as a means of resistance. He conceptualized a society devoid of unnecessary constraints, fear, distrust, humiliation, and shame, where individuals could effortlessly realize their desires and aspirations. Manto was an Urdu literature author noted for his focus on explicit and sexual themes. In contrast, contemporary respected authors and critics view him as a realist and humanitarian writer, describing his works as a vivid representation of his society and contemporary life.

References

Al-Azhari, A. (2011). *fictional literature Academic Library:* . Kabir Street Urdu Bazar Lahore.

Khaksha, P. (2002). *Manto and Bedi Comparative Study.* Educational Publishing House: Delhi.

Mubin, M. (2008). *Saadat Hasan Manto: Personality and art.* . Academic Literature Pakistan, Islamabad.

Nighat, R. K. (1988). *Urdu Short Fiction and Technical Studies:* . Book wise.

Qadeer, R. (2016). *Manto and Maupassa, a comparative study.* . University Book Agency: Khyber Bazar Peshawar.

Qamar, R. (2000). *Progressive Literature-Fifty Years Journey.* Educational Publishing House: Delhli.

Waqar, A. (1961). *Art is fiction. Urdu Center: Lahore.*

Waris, A. (2003). *Manto a Study.* . Al Hamra: Islamabad.